## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1		1.	A method for using a voice-messaging system to place local and long-	
2	distance telephone calls, comprising			
3	a voice-messaging system receiving a call placed by a user;			
4	verifying that the user is a valid user of the voice-messaging system;			
5		receiv	ing from the user a request to place a telephone call;	
6		receiv	ing from the user a telephone number of a third-party telephone line to	
7	be called; and	<del>-</del>		
8		placin	g a telephone call to the third-party telephone line associated with the	
9	third-party telephone number entered by the user.			
<b>1</b>		2.	The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of	
2	connecting the telephone call to the third-party telephone line if the third-party telephone line			
1 2 3 3 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	is available.			
1		3.	The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of receiving a call	
	placed by a user comprises receiving a toll-free call from the user.			
1		4.	The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of verifying that the	
1 2 3	user is a valid user comprises receiving and verifying a user-identification code and a			
3	password cod	e.		
1		5.	The method as recited in claim 4, wherein the step of receiving a	
2	telephone number comprises receiving a long-distance telephone number to be called.			
1		6.	The method as recited in claim 5, wherein the user-identification code	
2	is associated with a billing account, and wherein the charges for the long-distance call are			
3	charged to the billing account.			
1		7.	The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the voice-messaging system	
2	allows the use		pose between accessing voice messages or placing a telephone call.	
1		8.	The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the voice-messaging system	
2	directs the use		to a voice-messaging-system menu if a third-party-call connection is not	
3	established.	LI VACK	to a voice-messaging-system menu it a uniu-party-can connection is not	
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1	9. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the voice-messaging system				
2	directs the user back to a voice-messaging-system menu when the user enters a pre-defined				
3	signal at any step during the process of placing a call to a third party.				
1	10. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the step of connecting the				
2	telephone call to the third-party number comprises establishing a 3-way call between the user				
3	the voice-messaging system and the third-party telephone line.				
1	11. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the step of connecting the				
2	telephone call to the third-party number comprises:				
3	establishing a direct connection between the user and the third-party telephone				
4	line; and				
5	disconnecting the voice-messaging system from the call.				
5 1 2 2 3	12. The method as recited in claim 10, further comprising:				
13 2	during or after the call between the user and the third party, receiving a pre-				
3	defined signal from the user; and				
	transferring the user back to a voice-messaging-system menu.				
1 1 2 2 4 3					
1	13. An article of manufacture, comprising:				
2	a computer-usable medium having a computer-readable program-code means				
<b>3</b>	embodied therein for causing a voice-messaging system to place local and long-distance				
4	telephone calls, the computer-readable program-code means in said article of manufacture				
5	comprising;				
6	computer-readable program means for causing a computer to receive a				
7	call placed by a user;				
8	computer-readable program means for causing a computer to verify				
9	that the user is a valid user of the voice-messaging system;				
10	computer-readable program means for causing a computer to receive				
11	from the user a request to place a telephone call;				
12	computer-readable program means for causing a computer to receive				
13	from the user a telephone number of a third-party telephone line to be called; and				
14	computer-readable program means for causing a computer to place a				
15	telephone call to the third-party telephone line associated with the third-party				
16	telephone number entered by the user				

14. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 13, further comprising computer-readable program means for causing a computer to be connected to the third-party telephone line via the telephone call if the third-party telephone line is available.

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- 15. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 13, wherein the computer-readable program means for causing a computer to verify that the user is a valid user comprises computer-readable program means for causing a computer to receive and verify a user-identification code and a password code.
- 16. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 15, wherein the computer-readable program means for causing a computer to receive a telephone number comprises computer-readable program means for causing a computer to receive a long-distance telephone number to be called.
- 17. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 16, wherein the user-identification code is associated with a billing account, and wherein charges for the long-distance call are charged to the billing account.
- 18. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 13, further comprising computer-readable program means for causing a computer to provide the user a choice between accessing voice messages or placing a telephone call.
- 19. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 13, further comprising computer-readable program means for causing a computer to direct the user back to a voice-messaging-system menu if a third-party call connection is not established.
- 20. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 13, further comprising computer-readable program means for causing a computer to direct the user back to a voice-messaging-system menu when the user enters a pre-defined signal at any step during the process of placing a call to a third party.
- 21. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 14, wherein the computer-readable program means for causing a computer to be connected to the third-party telephone line via the telephone call comprises computer-readable program means for causing a computer to establish a three-way call between the user, the voice-messaging system and the third-party telephone line.

22.	The article of manufacture of claim 14, wherein the computer-readable				
program means for ca	using a computer to be connected to the third-party telephone line via				
the telephone line comprises computer-readable program means for causing a computer to					
establish a direct connection between the user and the third-party telephone line; and					
compu	ter-readable program means for causing a computer to disconnect the				
voice messaging syste	m from the call.				

23. The article of manufacture as recited in claim 21, further comprising computer-readable program means for causing a computer to receive a pre-defined signal from the user during or after the call between the user and the third party; and computer-readable program means for causing a computer to transfer the user back to a voice-messaging-system menu.